



Enjoying Painting 3

A step-by-step painting guide by Richard Robinson

Watch the full lesson at <https://mypaintingclub.com/lessons/250-Enjoying-Painting-3>

MY PAINTING CLUB

Introduction

In this chapter, I invite you to explore the vibrant world of color mixing and paint application, as we dive into a coastal sketch and a stunning scene from the Dart River Valley. This lesson is a wonderful opportunity to learn about using color, composition, and bold, expressive brushwork. We'll be working with a palette of Winsor & Newton paints, including some of my favorites like Winsor Blue, Venetian Red, and Cadmium Yellow Pale. These colors are powerful and semi-transparent, offering a rich array of possibilities for creating warm darks and subtle tints. As we paint, you'll discover how to use a medium like liquin to enhance your brushwork, ensuring the paint flows smoothly and doesn't stick. The scene itself is a rewarding subject, capturing the beauty and challenge of painting in the great outdoors, where the play of light and the presence of sandflies add a dynamic element to our creative process. Join me in this artistic journey and enrich your painting skills with techniques that bring your work to life.



Hidden Valley

Materials

Gather these materials before you start. If you don't have the exact same supplies, use what you have and substitute freely.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Winsor and Newton, artist's quality oil paints.
- Winsor blue (red shade)
- Venetian red
- Winsor green
- Titanium white
- Cadmium lemon
- Cadmium yellow pale
- Cadmium orange
- Gold ochre
- Permanent rose
- Cadmium red
- Magenta
- Brushes
- Size 12 chisel tip long bristle.
- Only one small brush, usually an ox /sable rigger type brush – size 1 or 2.
- Medium
- Liquin Original
- for painting medium.
- Canvas
- Fredrix Ultrasmooth Canvas
- , a polyflax, triple primed, fairly smooth surfaced canvas.

1 Brush Preparation



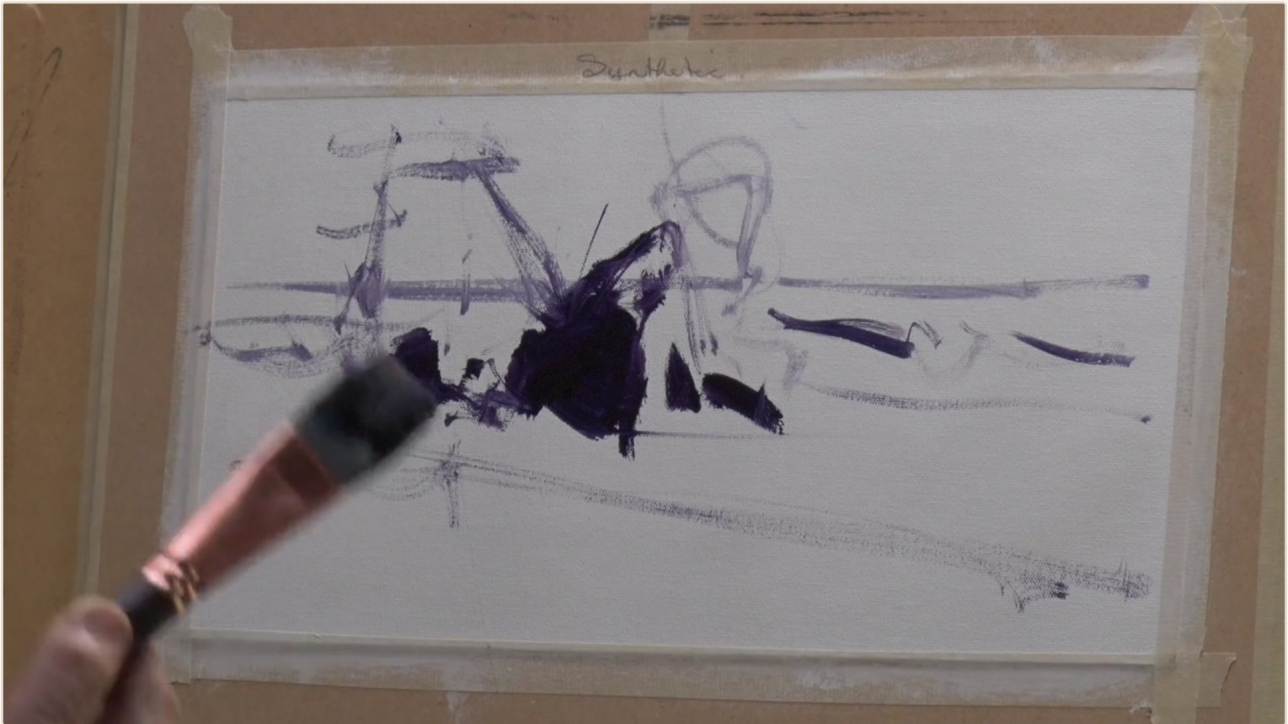
Prepare Your Brush

Dip your brush into your painting medium before approaching the paints. Work the medium into the bristles thoroughly. This helps the brush perform better by preventing the paint from sticking to it.

PRO TIP

Always dip your brush in medium before using paint to improve its performance.

2 Medium Usage Tips



Maintain Separate Brushes

Use separate brushes for dark and light colors. Once white is added to a brush, it becomes difficult to revert it to mid tones. Keep a dedicated brush for dark colors to maintain their purity.

Use Medium Carefully

Dip your brush into the medium without touching the sides or bottom of the container. This prevents the medium from becoming dirty, as paint can stick to the container and contaminate the medium.

PRO TIP

Keep brushes dedicated to specific color tones to maintain color purity.

3 Mixing Tones for Waves



Determine the Next Darkest Tone

Identify the next darkest tone needed for your painting. Consider the wave in the sea as a potential area to focus on for this tone.

Mix the Tone

Pick up some white paint and mix it into your chosen color. This will help you achieve the desired tone for the wave in the sea.

PRO TIP

Use white to adjust the tone of your color for the wave in the sea.

4 Adding Rocks and Shadows



Adjust the Shadow Color

Add a touch more purple to your shadow color, keeping the paint thin. If it appears too dark, lighten it by mixing in a bit of yellow. Apply this adjusted color along the base of the wave where you might see some subtle details.

Add the Second Rock

Use a clean, dark brush to add in the second rock at the back. Ensure the brush is clean to maintain the integrity of the dark color.

PRO TIP

Keep your brush clean when switching to dark colors to ensure clarity and depth in your painting.

5 Dark and Light Tone Balance



Mix Dark Tones

Use a dark color on your brush to mix into your existing color, being careful not to add too much. Add a hint of blue to suggest a little bit of rock extending from the main rock. This will help create depth and interest.

Establish Darkest Dark

Identify and apply your darkest dark tone first. This will serve as a reference point for the rest of your painting, ensuring a full range of tones.

Work from Dark to Light

Continue working from your darkest dark to lighter tones. This sequence allows you to judge the tonal range more easily, using the white of the canvas as your lightest point.

PRO TIP

Always establish your darkest dark and lightest light first to create a clear tonal range.

6 Brush Technique for Sky



Load Your Brush

Ensure your brush is well-loaded with paint. This helps in achieving clean and vibrant colors on the canvas.

Soften the Horizon

Gently soften the horizon line with your brush. This creates a smooth transition between sky and sea, adding depth to your painting.

PRO TIP

Keep your brush well-loaded to maintain clean and vibrant colors.

7 Mixing and Using Paint Efficiently



Build Color Patterns

Extend the color pattern from your initial color mix to avoid having patches of paint scattered across the palette. This helps maintain a cohesive palette and reduces waste.

Efficient Paint Usage

Use up the paint as you mix new colors. This ensures that your palette remains organized and that you make the most of your materials.

PRO TIP

Extend color patterns from initial mixes to keep your palette organized and reduce paint waste.

8 Sky and Wave Interaction



Prepare Your Brush

Ensure the paint on your brush is nice and creamy. This makes it easier to pick up and apply smoothly to the canvas.

Adjust the Sky Tone

Avoid making the sky too cold and threatening. Aim for a stormy look without turning it into a bright sunny day, as this complements the theme of a rough sea.

PRO TIP

Keep the paint creamy for easy application and smooth brushwork.

9 Adding Spray and Foam



Level the Horizon

Ensure the horizon line is level. A crooked horizon can be distracting and may detract from the overall composition of your painting.

Prepare for Spray and Foam

Clean your brush thoroughly to avoid muddying your colors. Mix white with a bit of your existing color to create the shadow area of the spray.

Add Spray Effect

Apply the mixed color to represent the spray coming up from behind the rocks. Allow the spray to obscure parts of the rock, creating a dynamic and natural burst effect.

PRO TIP

Ensure your horizon line is level to maintain a balanced composition.

10 Wave Highlights



Add White to the Wave

Apply a stroke of white paint along the top of the wave. This will serve as the base for creating the wave's highlight.

Blend the Wave

Use a clean brush to pull the white paint downwards into the wave. This creates a sense of motion and integrates the highlight with the rest of the wave.

Add Highlights

Use a flicking motion to add a few highlights to the wave. Focus on areas where light would naturally catch, enhancing the wave's dynamic appearance.

PRO TIP

Keep your paint thin until the final stages to allow for easy adjustments.

11 Brush and Palette Management



Maintain a Clean Palette

Use different areas of the palette for different colors to avoid frequent cleaning. This helps keep your colors pure and reduces the need to clean the palette often, perhaps only two or three times during a painting session.

Use Multiple Brushes

Avoid the hassle of washing brushes midway through your painting. Instead, use multiple brushes for different colors or sections. This saves time and keeps your workflow uninterrupted.

PRO TIP

Invest in extra brushes to minimize the need for cleaning during painting sessions.

12 Adding Shadows and Foam



Prepare the Brush

Ensure your brush is not too wet, as soft wet bristles can be unhelpful for this step. Adjust the moisture level of your brush to maintain control over the paint application.

Add Shadows to the Foam

Mix a generous amount of white with a touch of purple and a hint of red to create a shadow color for the foam. Apply this mixture to the foam areas, adding depth and dimension to the scene.

Enhance the Rock's Edge

Use the shadow color to soften the back edge of the rock slightly, integrating it into the scene. This will help create a more cohesive look.

Add Spray Details

With the same brush, add a few strokes of spray coming through the foam. This will add movement and a dynamic element to your painting.

PRO TIP

Mix a touch of purple and red with white to create realistic shadows on foam.

13 Adding Depth with Shadows



Add Shadow Behind the Rock

Introduce a suggestion of shadow behind the rock to enhance depth. Use a touch of red to integrate the shadow with the existing colors, as the light source is from the opposite side.

Darken the Foam's Edge

Apply a darker tone along the edge of the foam. This creates a contrast that emphasizes the light source and adds dimension to the scene.

PRO TIP

Use a touch of red in shadows to harmonize with surrounding colors and enhance depth.

14 Maintaining Clean Colours



Add Character to the Wave

Create a wave with a slightly uneven edge to add character. This irregularity can make the wave appear more natural and dynamic.

Incorporate Soft Reflections

Where the wave has an edge, add a soft reflection beneath it. This subtle reflection enhances the realism of the water.

Maintain Clean Colours

Ensure your palette remains clean to keep your colours vibrant. Clean colours contribute to a more striking and lively painting.

PRO TIP

Keep your palette clean to maintain vibrant and lively colours in your painting.

15 Edge Softening Techniques



Simplify Brush Strokes

Use simple, easy, sweeping brush strokes to create a smooth transition in your painting. Avoid hard lines across the canvas to maintain a natural flow.

Adjust Color Tones

Mix a bit of white with cadmium orange and a touch of blue to create a nice grey. If the color is too red, add more white to balance the warms and cools. Use warms and cools against each other to break up the color and add interest.

Incorporate Neutrals

Introduce neutral tones to exaggerate existing colors. Apply a cool tone to areas like the beach to prevent it from appearing too warm. Neutrals help in enhancing the vibrancy of surrounding colors.

Refine the Beach Area

Extend the beach slightly further down and across the reflection. Add a hint of sheen on the wet sand to create a realistic effect. This will help in achieving a rough and wild look.

Soften Edges

Soften the edges near the outside of the painting to prevent hard lines from drawing the viewer's eye away from the focal point. This keeps the viewer's attention where you want it.

PRO TIP

Soften edges near the painting's outer edges to keep the viewer's focus on the main subject.

16 Adding Life with Seagulls



Add Seagulls for Life

Use a brush with a fine tip to add small seagulls to your painting. This will give your artwork a spark of life and movement. If a seagull looks too large or threatening, simply remove it and try again with a smaller brush.

Balance Details

Incorporate subtle details like twigs or small elements to enhance realism without overdoing it. Be cautious not to clutter the painting with too many small dots or details, as this can detract from the overall composition.

PRO TIP

Use a fine-tipped brush to add small, lively details like seagulls to your painting.

17 Purposeful Brush Strokes



Ensure every brush stroke has a clear purpose. Avoid adding strokes just for the sake of it, as this can detract from your painting's overall composition.

Suggest Twigs and Sticks

Add a few twigs and sticks to your scene to create interest. Position them so they appear to stick up naturally from the sand, enhancing the realism without overbalancing the composition.

PRO TIP

Every brush stroke should contribute meaningfully to your painting.

18 Setting Up a New Scene



Sign the Painting

Use a small brush to sign your painting while it's still wet. This helps the signature feel like part of the painting and allows for easy adjustments if needed. Ensure the brush has a fine point to keep the signature from becoming too large.

Set Up the Scene

Use a large brush to quickly establish the layout of your painting. Decide on the position of the horizon, considering the beauty of the foreground. Aim for a slightly higher horizon to emphasize the foreground.

Sketch the Mountains

Indicate the mountain ranges like Cosmos Peaks and Rhybe Peaks with loose strokes. Focus on capturing the general shapes without getting too detailed. Adjust the horizon slightly lower to avoid crowding the mountains at the top.

Plan the Foreground

Visualize the foreground elements such as gravel banks, streams, and grass. Consider the composition and how these elements fit into the overall scene. Remember that a little extra planning can enhance the painting.

PRO TIP

Sign your painting while it's wet to easily integrate the signature and make adjustments if needed.

19 Dark and Light Tone Strategy



Identify Darkest Dark

Stand back from your work to get an overall impression. Identify the darkest dark in the foreground and choose a warm dark tone to start with. This will serve as a reference point for the rest of your painting.

Apply Dark Tones Sparingly

Apply dark tones in the foreground sparingly to bring it forward. Add just a few bits and pieces here and there to suggest depth and dimension.

Adjust Light Tones

Observe areas that are flatter to the sun and use lighter tones for these sections. This will help create contrast and a sense of light in your painting.

Incorporate Blue and Green Tones

Incorporate lovely blue tones in the background and adjust them slightly as needed. Use green tones in the foreground to create harmony, even if you're not a fan of green.

Cover the Canvas Quickly

Aim to cover the canvas quickly when painting outdoors. This helps establish your composition and allows you to adjust tones more effectively.

PRO TIP

Use the darkest dark as a reference point to judge other tones in your painting.

20 Mountain and Sky Tones



Add Variety to the Foreground

Introduce some variety by adding a bit more interest to the shallow areas. Use the existing color and incorporate shadows and gravel to create depth.

Adjust Tones for Depth

Add a touch more blue to your mix to push the area further away visually. Ensure the tones are correct to avoid blending the snow shadows with the sky.

Test Sky Tones

Even if you're not ready, add some sky to check that the tones will work well together. This helps in managing the separation between the mountain and the sky.

Define the Mountain Range

Paint the top of the mountain, focusing on the Cosmos Peaks. Use more blue and white to differentiate the tones between the closer and further parts of the range.

PRO TIP

Add sky tones early to ensure separation between mountain shadows and the sky.

21 Adjusting Mountain Colours



Lighten the Snow

Add more white and blue to lighten the snow area. This will help separate the snow and make it stand out better.

Adjust the Red Tone

If the snow appears too red, balance it by adding more blue and white. This will create a more natural and harmonious look.

PRO TIP

Use blue and white to adjust overly red areas for a balanced snow color.

22 Highlighting Mountain Peaks



Add Cloud Suggestions

Apply a thick layer of paint to suggest clouds in the sky. Use a light touch to create a soft, airy effect. Adjust the color as needed to harmonize with the surrounding tones.

Highlight Mountain Peaks

Use a lighter color to add highlights to the mountain peaks. Consider the brightness of the scene and adjust the snow color accordingly. Overlay white paint over other colors with a light touch to achieve a natural look.

PRO TIP

Use high-quality brushes and mix your paint to the right consistency for easy overlaying of colors.

23 Foreground Colour Adjustments



Add Light Hints

Introduce subtle hints of light in the water area to mimic the sky's reflection. This creates a cohesive look between the sky and water.

Darken Water Areas

Darken certain areas of the water slightly to avoid a uniform look. This adds depth and interest to the painting.

Add Vertical Strokes

Use a few vertical strokes in the water to suggest reflection. This technique enhances the water's reflective quality without overt detailing.

Enhance Sandy Area

Mix a hint of yellow with a touch more than the gold acre previously used. Apply this to the sandy area to achieve a warm, inviting tone.

PRO TIP

Use vertical strokes in water to suggest reflection and enhance its reflective quality.

24 Foreground Design Adjustments



Darken the Gravel and Sand

Darken the gravel and sand in the foreground to enhance visibility and definition. This will help bring out the details and create a more distinct separation from the background.

Adjust the Foreground Design

Reevaluate the placement of elements in the foreground to avoid clumsy shapes. If a shape isn't working, remove it and replace it with a more suitable design.

Modify the Wood Element

Change the design of the wood in the foreground if it appears to be coming downhill. Let it run off the edge of the canvas instead of the bottom to achieve a more pleasing composition.

PRO TIP

If a shape isn't working, don't hesitate to remove it and try a different design.

Summary & Key Takeaways

Embark on your painting journey by preparing your brushes and organizing your palette. Begin with a clear plan for your color tones, keeping brushes dedicated to specific colors to maintain purity. As you lay down the foundational tones, remember to establish the darkest darks and lightest lights first, setting a clear tonal range for your painting.

As you progress, focus on mixing colors efficiently and applying them with purpose. Use techniques like softening edges and maintaining clean colors to enhance the vibrancy and realism of your scene. Pay attention to the interaction between elements like sky and sea, and use shadows to add depth and dimension.

In the final stages, add life and movement with small details like seagulls, and ensure every brush stroke contributes meaningfully to the composition. Sign your painting while it's still wet to integrate your signature seamlessly. Stand back to assess your work, making adjustments to tones and details to achieve a harmonious and dynamic piece.

LESSON POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Always dip your brush in medium before using paint to improve its performance.
- Keep brushes dedicated to specific color tones to maintain color purity.
- Establish your darkest dark and lightest light first to create a clear tonal range.
- Keep your brush well-loaded to maintain clean and vibrant colors.
- Extend color patterns from initial mixes to keep your palette organized and reduce paint waste.
- Ensure your horizon line is level to maintain a balanced composition.
- Use a fine-tipped brush to add small, lively details like seagulls to your painting.
- Sign your painting while it's wet to easily integrate the signature and make adjustments if needed.



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